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## HAFEZ BEN ALI.

## Part I.

## I.

HAFEZ BEN ALI for his wondrous art  
 Was called the Arab with the Singing Heart:  
 And he was young and beautiful as Spring!  
 Rich in all languages, 'twas his to string  
 Rare pearls of thought upon the threads of rhyme.  
 His Orient soul held such exquisite chime  
 As from the minarets of Stamboul came,  
 At the last Feast of Roses, when the flame  
 Of sunset tinged the mosques with ruby dye,  
 Like blood, then turned to twilight silently.  
 He voiced such madrigals that birds grew mute:  
 And once, as he bent o'er a Persian lute,  
 Ravishing th' air with a delicious lay,  
 A Bulbul, list'ning, died with ecstasy!  
 HAFEZ was known in far Damascus, and  
 In Stamboul's palaces and Samarcand.  
 Lays that he sang were sounded on the Nile,  
 When oars were stopt and hearts beat time the while;  
 Trilled on the margent of the Lake of Pearl,  
 And to the ears of the Beddowee girl,  
 Were sung by oarsmen in pavilioned barge,  
 And Arabs tented on the Desert's marge.  
 Who did not love BEN ALI? Who'd not bring  
 Fresh dates and tamarinds to hear him sing?

## II.

BEN ALI came one evening to my\* tent,  
 And in his dark, sweet-thoughted eyes were blent  
 Such pensive patience and imprisoned woe,  
 My heart grew warm with tears. He spake quite low:  
 "There's but one God, to Him all glory is!  
 The sunshine and the crystal rain are His,  
 The myrtles swinging in the golden air—  
 The Hand of Flame that writes upon the skies  
 Is His: and, though He rules all destinies,  
 A broken blossom 's not beneath His care!"  
 "As Night," said I, "packs heaven with her worlds,  
 So dost thou stud thy speech with Wisdom's pearls—  
 Rich as the cream of the banana, is  
 The stream of melody that floods thy lip:  
 Sweeter than musk from Khoten purchased, 'tis,  
 Or luscious honeys that from mangos drip—  
 Richer, sweeter to the heart of man  
 Than fountains to the thirsting Caravan.  
 Thy being is but one unceasing praise  
 Of Him, the Clement. Many be thy days!"

## III.

"By Allah! no! it is not so!" he cried,  
 And tore the snowy turban from his head,  
 Scattering topazes, rubies, far and wide,  
 And strings of milky pearl and sapphire red.  
 Then prostrate 'mong the scattered gems he said:  
 "When I shall die, my soul will go to flame!  
 I lack much faith: I have defiled His name.  
 When from this House of Clay I shall arise,  
 And kneel before the gates of Paradise,  
 Azrael will cry in anger: *It is he*  
*Who dared to ask why that same God who cares*  
*For every stamen that the tulip bears,*  
*Should brim the hearts of men with misery.*  
*Go! get thee from the regions of the Blest!"*  
 And in deep sorrow HAFEZ smote his breast.  
 Softly I laid my hand upon his own,  
 And looked into the depths of his fine eyes,  
 Which were like two drenched violets the skies  
 Had wept upon. He spake in milder tone:  
 "There's but one God, to Him all glory is!  
 The gifts of grief and ecstasy are his."

\* The tale is supposed to be related by an old Sheikh.

## IV.

Then I: "The gift of grief makes rich the soul!  
 The tears one spills upon his heart are as  
 The mystic waters of the Nile, that roll  
 Above their banks and fertilize the plain.  
 He that has sorrow in his bosom, has  
 Relationship to Nature, to the wind  
 Shudd'ring at night-fall, and the sobbing rain!  
 Affliction bringeth wisdom to the mind,—  
 Probing and healing the diviner part."  
 "A good physician is a holy heart,"  
 Said HAFEZ, meekly, "and that heart is thine.  
 My soul has drawn thy words in, as a vine  
 The diamond dew-drops sprinkled from the stars.  
 My heart leaped in me, like a Georgian girl  
 That throws herself against the latticed bars  
 Of a Turk's Harem. I'd have strangled Life  
 In wines that flow like streams of molten pearl!  
 But it has gone, that sinful inner strife:  
 And it has come, that holy, blissful calm,  
 They feel who see, through woe, the Good.  
 Faith drops upon the aching heart a balm,  
 Soothing as fumes of burning sandal-wood."

## V.

"Now thou art HAFEZ! One might almost swear,  
 Passion had never rested in those eyes,  
 But that Good Angels, only, nestled there,  
 Mistaking the dear orbs for Paradise!  
 Now that thou hast thy weakness from thee flung,  
 And the warm drops that leaped, like meteors,  
 From out the heaven of thine eyes, are gone,  
 And thy heart's night is melted into morn,  
 Tell one who loves thee, why this passion hung  
 Those drooping lashes with such heavy tears."  
 Then HAFEZ took my lute, which laid near by,  
 And flung his fingers o'er the golden chords,  
 Until those pulses throbbed with melody,  
 And with the music came these silvery words:

## 1.

"Nursling of the Orient sun!  
 Loveliest eyes e'er looked upon!  
 O! faultless Houris, night-eyed maid,  
 Within the shadow of thine eyes  
 Be evermore my image laid,  
 For there it is my being lies!

## 2.

"I saw thee, and my conscious blood  
 Leaped through my veins a fiery flood!  
 Oh, richer seemed those lips of thine  
 Than liquid rubies—Shiraz wine!  
 Thy glossy hair was in festoons:  
 Thy bosom, two full-blossomed moons,  
 By silken folds was taught to know,  
 How much to hide, how much to show.  
 And when you passed, I could but deem  
 'Twas music, floating thro' a dream!

## 3.

"Oh, much I love El Kraz, my mare—  
 Fleet as the lightning of the skies—  
 But, maiden with the ebon hair,  
 Whose rich cheek with the olive vies,  
 I worship thee till it is sin!  
 Ah! HAFEZ lost his soul within  
 The depths of thine Egyptian eyes!

(To be Continued.)